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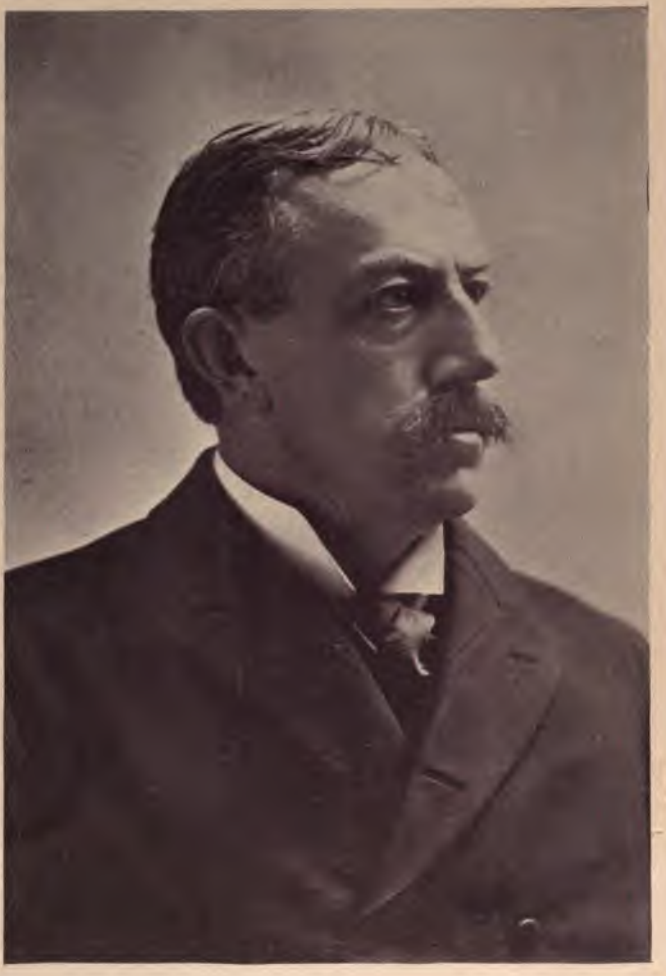

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AND THE

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BY
DAVID STARR JORDAN
President of
Leland Stanford Junior University.

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CALIFORNIA AND THE CALIFORNIANS

BY

DAVID STARR JORDAN

PRESIDENT OF

STANFORD UNIVERSITY

Characteristics and the critics.

The Californian loves his state because his state loves him, and he returns her love with a fierce affection that men of other regions are slow to understand. Hence he is impatient of outside criticism. Those who do not love California cannot understand her, and, to his mind, their shafts, however aimed, fly wide of the mark. Thus, to say that California is commercially asleep, that her industries are gambling ventures, that her local politics is in the hands of professional pickpockets, that her small towns are the shabbiest in Christendom, that her saloons control more constituents than her churches, that she is the slave of corporations, that she knows no such thing as public opinion, that she has not yet learned to distinguish enterprise from highway robbery, nor reform from blackmail,—all these things and many more the Californian may admit in discussion, or may say for himself, but he does not find them acceptable from others. They may be more or less true, in certain times and places, but the conditions which have permitted them will likewise mend them. It is said in the Alps that "not all the vulgar people who come to Chamouny can ever make Chamouny

vulgar." For similar reasons, not all the sordid people who drift overland can ever vulgarize California. Her fascination endures, whatever the accidents of population.

Climate scenery and freedom.

The charm of California has, in the main, three sources—scenery, climate, and freedom of life.

To know the glory of California scenery, one must live close to it through the changing years. From Siskiyou to San Diego, from Mendocino to Mariposa, from Tahoe to the Farallones, lake, crag, or chasm, forest, mountain, valley, or island, river, bay, or jutting headland, every one bears the stamp of its own peculiar beauty, a singular blending of richness, wildness, and warmth. Coastwise everywhere sea and mountains meet, and the surf of the cold Japanese current breaks in turbulent beauty against tall "rincones" and jagged reefs of rock. Slumbering amid the hills of the Coast Range,

> "A misty camp of mountains pitched tumultuously,"

lie golden valleys dotted with wide-limbed oaks, or smothered under over-weighted fruit trees. Here, too, crumble to ruins the old Franciscan missions, each in its own fair valley, passing monuments of California's first page of written history.

Inland rises the great Sierra, with spreading ridge and foothill, like some huge, sprawling centipede, its granite back unbroken for a thousand miles. Frost-torn peaks, of every height and bearing, pierce the blue wastes above. Their slopes are dark with forests of noble pines and giant sequoias, the mightiest of trees, in whose silent aisles one may wander all day long and see no sign of man. Dropped here and there rest purple lakes which mark the

"Far down the fragrant
cañons sing the
green and troubled rivers."

craters of dead volcanoes, or which swell the polished basins where vanished glaciers did their last work. Through mountain meadows run swift brooks over-peopled with trout, while from the crags leap full-throated streams, to be half blown away in mist before they touch the valley floor. Far down the fragrant cañons sing the green and troubled rivers, twisting their way lower and lower to the common plains. Even the hopeless stretches of alkali and sand, sinks of lost streams, in the southeastern counties, are redeemed by the delectable mountains that on all sides shut them in. Everywhere the landscape seems to swim in crystalline ether, while over all broods the warm California sun. Here, if anywhere, life is worth living, full and rich and free.

Sunshine and flowers.

As there is from end to end of California scarcely one commonplace mile, so from one end of the year to the other there is hardly a tedious day. Two seasons only has California, but two are enough if each in its way be perfect. Some have called the climate "monotonous," but so, no doubt, is good health. In terms of Eastern experience, the seasons may be defined as "late in the spring and early in the fall;"

"Half a year of clouds and flowers, half a year of dust and sky,"

according to Bret Harte. But with the dust and sky comes the unbroken succession of days of sunshine, the dry invigorating air, and the boundless overflow of vine and orchard. Each season in its turn brings its fill of satisfaction, and winter or summer we regret to look forward to change, because we would not give up what we have for the remembered delights of the season that is past.

California Kind to childhood and old age.

If one must choose, in all the fragrant California year the best month is June, for then the air is softest, and a touch of summer's gold overlies the green of winter. But October, when the first swift rains

"dash the whole long slope with color,"

and leave the clean-washed atmosphere so absolutely transparent that even distance is no longer blue, has a charm not less alluring.

So far as man is concerned, the one essential fact is that he is never the climate's slave; he is never beleaguered by the powers of the air. Winter and summer alike call him out of doors. In summer he is not languid, for the air is never sultry. In most regions he is seldom hot, for in the shade or after nightfall the dry air is always cool. When it rains, the air may be chilly, indoors or out, but it is never cold enough to make the remorseless base-burner a welcome alternative. The habit of roasting one's self all winter long is unknown in California. The old Californian seldom built a fire for warmth's sake. When he was cold in the house he went out of doors to get warm. The house was a place for storing food and keeping one's belongings from the wet. To hide in it from the weather would be to lay a false stress on its function.

The climate of California is especially kind to childhood and old age. Men live longer there, and, if unwasted by dissipation, strength of body is better conserved. To children the conditions of life are particularly favorable. California could have no better advertisement at some world's fair than the visible demonstration of this

"A mist
of mount
pitched
tumultu

fact. A series of measurements of the children of Oakland has recently been taken, in the interest of comparative child study; and should the average of these for different ages be worked into a series of moulds or statues for comparison with similar models from Eastern cities, the result would surprise. The children in California, other things being equal, are larger, stronger, and better formed than their Eastern cousins of the same age. This advantage of development lasts, unless cigarettes, late hours, or grosser forms of dissipation come in to destroy it. A wholesome, sober, out-of-door life in California invariably means a vigorous maturity.

The Eastern and Western man.

A third element of charm in California is that of personal freedom. The dominant note in the social development of the state is individualism, with all that this implies of good or evil. Man is man, in California: he exists for his own sake, not as part of a social organism. He is, in a sense, superior to society. In the first place, it is not his society; he came from some other region on his own business. Most likely, he did not intend to stay; but, having summered and wintered in California, he has become a Californian, and now he is not contented anywhere else. Life on the coast has, for him, something of the joyous irresponsibility of a picnic. The feeling of children released from school remains with grown people.

"A Western man," says Dr. Amos Griswold Warner, "is an Eastern man who has had some additional experiences." The Californian is a man from somewhere or anywhere in America or Europe, typically from New England, perhaps, who has learned a thing or two he did not know in the East, and perhaps has forgotten some things it would have

There is elbow room for everybody.

been as well to remember. The things he has learned relate chiefly to elbow-room, nature at first hand, and "the unearned increment." The thing he is most likely to forget is that escape from public opinion is not escape from the consequences of wrong action.

Of elbow-room California offers abundance. In an old civilization men grow like trees in a close-set forest. Individual growth and symmetry give way to the necessity of crowding. There is no room for spreading branches, and the characteristic qualities and fruitage develop only at the top. On the frontier men grow as the California live oak, which, in the open field, sends its branches far and wide.

With plenty of elbow-room the Californian works out his own inborn character. If he is greedy, malicious, intemperate, by nature, his bad qualities rise to the second degree in California, and sometimes to the third. The whole responsibility rests on himself. Society has no part of it, and he does not pretend to be what he is not, out of deference to society. "Hypocrisy is the homage vice pays to virtue," but in California no such homage is demanded or accepted. In like manner, the virtues become intensified in freedom. Nowhere in the world can one find men and women more hospitable, more refined, more charming, than in the homes of prosperous California. And these homes, whether in the pine forests of the Sierras, in the orange groves of the south, in the peach orchards of the Coast range, or on the great stock ranches, are the delight of all visitors who enter their open doors. To be sure, the bewildering hospitality of the great financiers and greater gamblers of the sixties and seventies is a thing of

the past. We shall never again see such prodigal entertainment as that which Ralston, bankrupt, cynical, and magnificent, once dispensed in Belmont Cañon. Nor do we find, nowadays, such lavish outgiving of fruit and wine, or such rushing of tally-hos, as once preceded the auction sale of town lots in paper cities. These gorgeous "spreads" were not hospitality, and disappeared when the traveler had learned his lesson. Their avowed purpose was "the sale of worthless land to old duffers from the East." But real hospitality is characteristic of all parts of California where men and women have an income beyond the needs of the day.

California has outgrown Provincialism.

To a very unusual degree the Californian forms his own opinions on matters of politics, religion, and human life, and these views he expresses without reserve. His own head he "carries under his own hat," and whether this be silk or a sombrero is a matter of his own choosing. The dictates of church and party have no binding force on him. The Californian does not confine his views to abstractions. He has his own opinions of individual men and women. If need be, he will analyze the character, motives, and actions of his neighbor in a way which will horrify the traveler who has grown up in the shade of a libel law.

The typical Californian has largely outgrown provincialism. He has seen much of the world, and he knows the varied worth of varied lands. He travels more widely than the man of any other state, and he has the education which travel gives. As a rule, the well-to-do Californian knows Europe better than the average Eastern man of equal financial resources, and the chances are that his

Provinciality densely ignorant of our own vast domain.

range of experience includes a part of Asia as well. A knowledge of his own country is a matter of course. He has no sympathy with "the essential provinciality of the mind which knows the Eastern seaboard, and has some measure of acquaintance with countries and cities, and with men from Ireland to Italy, but which is densely ignorant of our own vast domain, and thinks that all that lies beyond Philadelphia belongs to the West." Not that provincialism is unknown in California, or that its occasional exhibition is any less absurd or offensive here than elsewhere. For example, one may note a tendency to set up local standards for literary work done in California. Another, more harmful idea would insist that methods outworn in the schools elsewhere are good because they are Californian. This is the usual provincialism of ignorance, and it is found the world over. Especially is it characteristic of centers of population. When men come into contact with men instead of with the forces of nature, they mistake their own conventionalities for the facts of existence. It is not what life is, but what "the singular mess we agree to call life" is, that interests them. In this fashion they lose their real understanding of affairs, become the toys of their local environment, and are marked as provincials or tenderfeet when they stray away from home.

California is emphatically one of "earth's male lands," to accept Browning's classification. The first Saxon settlers were men, and in their rude civilization women had no part. For years women in California were objects of curiosity or of chivalry, disturbing rather than cementing influences in society. Even yet California is

"Purple lakes
which mark the craters
of dead volcanoes."

essentially a man's state. It is common to say that public opinion does not exist there; but such a statement is not wholly correct. It does exist, but it is an out-of-door public opinion,—a man's view of men. There is, for example, a strong public opinion against hypocrisy, in California, as more than one clerical renegade has found, to his discomfiture. The pretense to virtue is the one vice that is not forgiven. If a man be not a liar, few questions are asked, least of all the delicate one as to the "name he went by in the states." What we commonly call public opinion—the cut-and-dried decision on social and civic questions—is made up in the house. It is essentially feminine in its origin, the opinion of the home circle as to how men should behave. In California there is little which corresponds to the social atmosphere pervading the snug, white-painted, green-blinded New England villages, and this little exists chiefly in communities of people transported in block, — traditions, conventionalities, prejudices, and all. There is, in general, no merit attached to conformity, and one may take a wide range of rope without necessarily arousing distrust. Speaking broadly, in California the virtues of life spring from within, and are not prescribed from without. The young man who is decent only because he thinks that some one is looking, would do well to stay away. The stern law of individual responsibility turns the fool over to the fool-killer without a preliminary trial. No finer type of man can be found in the world than the sober Californian; and yet no coast is strewn with wrecks more pitiful.

The fool-killer and the law of individual responsibility.

There are some advantages in the absence of a compelling force of public opinion. One of them is found in

The Californian equal to all emergencies.

the strong self-reliance of men and women who have made and enforced their own moral standards. With very many men life in California brings a decided strengthening of the moral fiber. They must reconsider, justify, and fight for their standards of action; and by so doing they become masters of themselves. With men of weak nature the result is not so encouraging. The disadvantage is shown in lax business methods, official carelessness and corruption, the widespread corrosions of vulgar vices, and the general lack of pride in their work shown by artisans and craftsmen.

In short, California is a man's land, with male standards of action,— a land where one must give and take, stand and fall, as a man. With the growth of woman's realm of homes and houses, this will slowly change. It is changing now, year by year, for good and ill; and soon California will have a public opinion. Her sons will learn to fear "the rod behind the looking-glass," and to shun evil not only because it is vile, but because it is improper.

Contact with the facts of nature has taught the Californian something of importance. To have elbow-room is to touch nature at more angles; and whenever she is touched she is an insistent teacher. Whatever is to be done, the typical Californian knows how to do it, and how to do it well. He is equal to every occasion. He can cinch his own saddle, harness his own team, bud his own grapevines, cook his own breakfast, paint his own house; and because he cannot go to the market for every little service, perforce he serves himself. In dealing with college students in California, one is impressed by their boundless ingenuity. If anything needs doing, some student can do

it for you. Is it to sketch a waterfall, to engrave a portrait, to write a sonnet, to mend a saddle, to sing a song, to build an engine, or to "bust a broncho," there is some one at hand who can do it, and do it artistically. Varied ingenuity California demands of her pioneers. Their native originality has been intensified by circumstances, until it has become a matter of tradition and habit. The processes of natural selection have favored the survival of the ingenious, and the quality of adequacy has become hereditary.

The greed for gold.

The possibility of the unearned increment is a great factor in the social evolution of California. Its influence has been widespread, persistent, and, in most regards, baneful. The Anglo-Saxon first came to California for gold to be had for the picking up. The hope of securing something for nothing, money or health without earning it, has been the motive for a large share of the subsequent immigration. From those who have grown rich through undeserved prosperity, and from those who have grown poor in the quest of it, California has suffered sorely. Even now, far and wide, people think of California as a region where wealth is not dependent on thrift, where one can somehow "strike it rich" without that tedious attention to details and expenses which wears out life in effete regions such as Europe and the Eastern States. In this feeling there is just enough of truth to keep the notion alive, but never enough to save from disaster those who make it a working hypothesis. The hope of great or sudden wealth has been the mainspring of enterprise in California, but it has also been the excuse for shiftlessness and recklessness, the cause of social disintegration and moral decay. The

Speculation and business.

"Argonauts of '49" were a strong, self-reliant, generous body of men. They came for gold, and gold in abundance. Most of them found it, and some of them retained it. Following them came a miscellaneous array of parasites and plunderers; gamblers, dive-keepers and saloon-keepers, who fed fat on the spoils of the Argonauts. Every Roaring Camp had its Jack Hamlin as well as its Flynn of Virginia, and the wild, strong, generous, reckless aggregate cared little for thrift, and wasted more than they earned.

But it is not gold alone that in California has dazzled men with visions of sudden wealth. Orange groves, peach orchards, prune orchards, wheat-raising, lumbering, horse-farms, chicken-ranches, bee-ranches, seal-poaching, cod-fishing, salmon-canning,—each of these has held out the same glittering possibility. Even the humblest ventures have caught the prevailing tone of speculation. Industry and trade have been followed, not for a living, but for sudden wealth, and often on a scale of personal expenses out of all proportion to the probable results. In the sixties, when the gold fever began to subside, it was found that the despised "cow counties" would bear marvelous crops of wheat. At once wheat-raising was undertaken on a grand scale. Farms of five thousand to fifty thousand acres were established on the old Spanish grants in the valleys of the Coast Range and in the interior.

The working out of most of the placer mines and the advent of quartz-crushing with elaborate machinery have changed gold-mining from speculation to regular business, to the great advantage of the state. In the same manner the development of irrigation is changing the char-

"Half a year
of clouds
and flowers."

[illegible] The laws of economics and the individual

[illegible]

[illegible]

San Francisco and those that live from hand to mouth.

The great body of immigrants to California have been sound and earnest, fit citizens of the young state, but this is rarely true of seekers of the unearned increment. No one is more greedy for money than the man who can never get any. Rumors of golden chances have brought in a steady stream of incompetents from all places and all strata of social life. From the common tramp to the inventor of "perpetual motions" in mechanics or in Sociology, is a long step in the moral scale, but both are alike in their eagerness to escape from the "competitive social order" of the East, in which their abilities found no recognition. Whoever has deservedly failed in the older states is sure at least once in his life to think of redeeming his fortunes in California. Once on the Pacific slope the difficulties in the way of his return seem insurmountable. The dread of the winter's cold alone is in most cases a deterrent factor. Thus San Francisco, by force of circumstances, has become the hopper into which fall incompetents from all the world, and from which few escape. The city contains about three hundred thousand people. Of these, a vast number, thirty thousand to fifty thousand, it may be, have no real business in San Francisco. They live from hand to mouth, by odd jobs that might be better done by better people; and whatever their success in making a living, they swell the army of discontent, and confound all attempts to solve industrial problems. In this rough estimate I do not count San Francisco's own poor, of which there is a moderate proportion, but only those who have drifted in from the outside. I would include, however, not only those who are economically impotent, but also those who follow the

"While from the crags leap full throated streams."

weak for predatory ends. In this last category I place a certain number of saloon-keepers; a class of so-called lawyers; a long line of soothsayers, clairvoyants, lottery agents, and joint-keepers, beside gamblers, sweaters, promoters of "medical institutes," magnetic, psychical, and magic "healers," and other types of unhanged, but more or less pendable, scoundrels that feed upon the life-blood of the weak and foolish. The other cities of California have had a similar experience. Each has its reputation for hospitality, and each has a considerable population which has come in from other regions because incapable of making its own way. It is not the poor and helpless alone who are the victims of imposition. There are fools in all walks of life. Many a well-dressed man or woman can be found in the rooms of the clairvoyant or the Chinese "doctor." In matters of health, especially, men grasp at the most unpromising straws. In one city lately visited, I found scarcely a business block that did not contain at least one human leech under the trade name of "healer," metaphysical, electrical, astral, divine, or what not. And these will thrive so long as men seek health or fortune with closed eyes and open hands.

When men seek health or fortune with closed eyes and open hands.

In no way has the unearned increment been more mischievous than in the booming of cities. With the growth of towns comes increase in the value of the holdings of those who hold and wait. If the city grows rapidly enough, these gains may be inordinately great. The marvelous beauty of Southern California and the charm of its climate have impressed thousands of people. Two or three times this impression has been epidemic. At one time almost every bluff along the coast, from Los Angeles

Boomers and the booms.

to San Diego and beyond, was staked out in town lots. The wonderful climate was everywhere, and everywhere men had it for sale, not only along the coast, but throughout the orange-bearing region of the interior. Every resident bought lots, all the lots he could hold. The tourist took his hand in speculation. Corner lots in San Diego, Del Mar, Azusa, Redlands, Riverside, Pasadena, anywhere, brought fabulous prices. A village was laid out in the uninhabited bed of a mountain torrent, and men stood in the streets in Los Angeles, ranged in line, all night long, to await their turn in buying lots. Worthless land and inaccessible, barren cliffs, river-wash, sand hills, cactus deserts, sinks of alkali, everything met with ready sale. The belief that Southern California would be one great city was universal. The desire to buy became a mania. "Millionaires of a day," even the shrewdest lost their heads, and the boom ended, as such booms always end, in utter collapse.

Mr. T. S. Van Dyke, of San Diego, has written of this collapse: "The money market tightened almost on the instant. From every quarter of the land the drain of money outward had been enormous, and had been balanced only by the immense amount constantly coming in. Almost from the day this inflow ceased money seemed scarce everywhere, for the outgo still continued. Not only were vast sums going out every day for water-pipe, railroad iron, cement, lumber, and other material for the great improvements going on in every direction, most of which material had already been ordered, but thousands more were still going out for diamonds and a host of other things already bought—things that

"Passing monument
of California's first page
of written history."

only increase the general indebtedness of a community by making those who cannot afford them imitate those who can. And tens of thousands more were going out for butter, eggs, pork, and even potatoes and other vegetables, which the luxurious boomers thought it beneath the dignity of millionaires to raise."

Normal growth and financial bubbles.

But the normal growth of Los Angeles and her sister towns has gone on, in spite of these spasms of fever and their consequent chills. Their real advantages could not be obscured by the bursting of financial bubbles. By reason of situation and climate they have continued to attract men of wealth and enterprise, as well as those in search of homes and health.

The search for the unearned increment in bodily health brings many to California who might better have remained at home. The invalid finds health in California only if he is strong enough to grasp it. To one who can spend his life out of doors it is indeed true that "our pines are trees of healing," but to one confined to the house, there is little gain in the new conditions. To those accustomed to the close heat of Eastern rooms the California house in the winter seems depressingly chilly.

I know of few things more pitiful than the annual migration of hopeless consumptives to Los Angeles, Pasadena, and San Diego. The Pullman cars in the winter are full of sick people, banished from the East by physicians who do not know what else to do with their incurable patients. They go to the large hotels of Los Angeles or Pasadena, and pay a rate they cannot afford. They shiver in half-warmed rooms; take cold after cold; their symptoms grow alarming; their money wastes away; and

One-lunged people and jaundiced hypochondriacs.

finally, in utter despair, they are hurried back homeward, perhaps to die on board the train. Or it may be that they choose cheap lodging-houses, at prices more nearly within their reach. Here again, they suffer for want of home food, home comforts, and home warmth, and the end is just the same. People hopelessly ill should remain with their friends; even California has no health to give to those who cannot earn it, in part at least, by their own exertions.

It is true that the "one-lunged people" form a considerable part of the population of Southern California. It is also true that no part of our Union has a better population, and that many of these men and women are now as robust and vigorous as one could desire. But this happy change is possible only to those in the first stages of the disease. Out-of-door life and physical activity enable the system to suppress the germs of disease, but climate without activity does not cure. So far as climate is concerned, many parts of the arid regions in Arizona, New Mexico, and Colorado as well as portions of Old Mexico (Cuernavaca or Morelia for example) are more favorable than California, because they are protected from the chill of the sea. Another class of health-seekers receives less sympathy in California, and perhaps deserves less. Jaundiced hypochondriacs and neurotic wrecks shiver in the California winter boarding-houses, torment themselves with ennui at the country ranches, poison themselves with "nerve foods," and perhaps finally survive to write the sad and squalid "truth about California." Doubtless it is all inexpressibly tedious to them; subjective woe is always hard to bear—but it is not California.

"Crumble to ruins
the old
Franciscan Missions."

There are others, too, who are disaffected, but I need not stop to discuss them or their points of view. It is true, in general, that few to whom anything else is anywhere possible find disappointment in California.

Life in California is intensely American.

With all this, the social life is, in its essentials, that of the rest of the United States, for the same blood flows in the veins of those whose influence dominates it. Under all its deviations and variations lies the old Puritan conscience, which is still the backbone of the civilization of the republic. Life in California is a little fresher, a little freer, a good deal richer, in its physical aspects, and for these reasons, more intensely and characteristically American. With perhaps ninety-five per cent of identity there is five per cent of divergence, and this five per cent I have emphasized even to exaggeration. We know our friends by their slight differences in feature or expression, not by their common humanity. Much of this divergence is already fading away. Scenery and climate remain, but there is less elbow-room, and the unearned increment is disappearing. That which is solid will endure; the rest will vanish. The forces that ally us to the East are growing stronger every year with the immigration of men with new ideas. The vigorous growth of the two universities in California insures the elevation as well as the retention of these ideas. Through their influence California will contribute a generous share to the social development of the East, and be a giver as well as a receiver.

To-day the pressure of higher education is greater to the square mile, if we may use such an expression, than anywhere else in our country. In no other state is the path from the farmhouse to the college so well trodden

Sure of themselves, fearless of the future.

as here. It requires no prophet to forecast the educational preeminence of California for the basis of intellectual development is already assured. But however close the alliance with Eastern culture, to the last certain traits will persist. California is the most cosmopolitan of all the states of the Union, and such she will remain. Whatever the fates may bring, her people will be tolerant, hopeful, and adequate, sure of themselves, masters of the present, fearless of the future.

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